

Anne Fesh

From: Carolfaivre@aol.com
Sent: Friday, November 10, 2000 10:17 PM
To: access@fcc.gov; info@acb.org
Subject: Video Description for the blind

As the mate of a person with very low vision - I realize how very important it is to have the vocal descriptions. Obviously I cannot always be at his side to narrate - and he would especially appreciate the service when he is home alone.

This service is at least as important as closed captioning for the hearing impaired.

I strongly urge you to vote in favor of this service.

Thank you,

Carol Bright
Mesa, AZ

Anne Fesh

From: Melanie Brunson [Mbrunson@acb.org]
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2000 10:22 AM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org
Subject: Docket No. 99-339

November 13, 2000

Magalie Salas
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. SW
Washington DC 20554

The following comments are submitted as an official filing in opposition to the Petitions for Reconsideration of the Reported Order on Video Description.

I am a congenitally blind person who frequently follows, or attempts to follow, television programming without the assistance of a sighted person who can give me information about what is taking place on the tv screen. My efforts to do this have been greatly enhanced when video description has been available for the programs I have been following. Therefore, I appreciated the FCC's insightful and forward-thinking decision in July, 2000, to begin expanding the availability of video described programming on television. I am now disturbed by the petitions for reconsideration which have been filed with the Commission, and ask that the members of the FCC reject these petitions in their entirety.

In the first place, the petitioners have not presented any new evidence that warrants a reconsideration of this ruling. Neither have they presented any arguments that were not considered prior to the ruling.

Secondly, the objection of the National Federation of the Blind that this ruling should be reconsidered because it does not go far enough in providing increased access to emergency information is ludicrous. While it is true that increased access to emergency information is important, and something we as blind citizens need, that fact does not nullify our need for access to other types of information. A better course would be for the National Federation of the Blind to request an additional rulemaking regarding access to emergency information. This course would, I believe, more accurately represent the views of much of the blind community.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter. Please reject these petitions for reconsideration as unwarranted and without merit.

Very truly yours:
Melanie Brunson

Anne Fesh

From: smbryant@gundluth.org
Sent: Wednesday, November 08, 2000 1:00 PM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org
Subject: Docket No. 99-339

Magalie Salas, Secretary
The Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Ms. Salas:

I am writing to you to submit my comments in opposition to petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on video description. I was very pleased to learn of the July 21st ruling of the FCC on providing video description for television programming by April 2002. I applaud the efforts of the Commissioners of the FCC for their vote requiring the networks to begin providing this essential information service. I would like to urge all who read this letter to continue supporting this ruling and to continue the plan of providing video description of the key elements of television programming for blind and visually impaired viewers by April, 2002.

As an occupational therapist with our Low Vision Rehabilitation Clinic, I work mainly with older adults, most who live alone, and have macular degeneration. Their visual impairment limits their ability to read what is on the television screen. As a result, I have listened to many older Americans describe their frustrations in not being able to view their televisions. One of the most frustrating situations is when a weather alert comes across visually on the television, but they have no way of knowing the seriousness of the weather alert and if they are in danger. Video description would give immediate and very important safety information to these individuals. I also know the joy that visually impaired and blind individuals get from video described movies. Having this technology allows an individual an alternate means of knowing what is happening and avoids the need and inconvenience of having a sighted person provide this information. Again, many individuals that I work with, live alone and would benefit from video description.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming the value of video description to the visually impaired and blind. Our population is aging and in the near future there will be escalating numbers of Americans who could benefit from video description. Please continue your efforts to make video description available by April 2002. The petitioners have not provided any new information which was not already known at the time the FCC reached its decision and issued the ruling. I urge you to go forward with the ruling and the eventual implementation of this very valuable service.

Thank you for reading this correspondence.

Sincerely,

Sharon Bryant MS, CTRS, OTR
Gundersen Lutheran
La Crosse, WI

Anne Fesh

From: Michael Byington [michael.byington@envisionus.com]
Sent: Friday, November 03, 2000 12:50 AM
To: 'access@fcc.gov'
Cc: 'info@acb.org'
Subject: FCC Docket 99-339

PLEASE REPLY TO: Michael Byington, Director
Envision Governmental Affairs Office
924 S. Kansas Ave
Topeka, Kansas 66612
(785) 354-4747 (Topeka Office)
(785) 640-4500 (pager and mobil)
(785) 354-4646 (FAX)
mbyingto@ink.org or
michael.byington@envisionus.com

November 1, 2000

Magalie Sales, Secretary
The Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Secretary Sales:

RE: DOCKET 99-339

OFFICIAL FILING: IN OPPOSITION TO THE PETITIONERS FOR RECONSIDERATION ON
THE REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION

This filing is submitted on behalf of Envision, a not for profit corporation which provides employment, rehabilitation and advocacy services for persons who are blind or who have low vision. This filing is also submitted with the very strong personal convictions of its author. I am a legally blind citizen, who is married to a person who is totally blind. As the Director of Governmental Affairs for Envision, I am empowered to express the position of this corporation.

Envision submitted testimony supporting the original ruling generated through DOCKET 99-339. We continue to support the rules which resulted from this Docket.

We want to begin by thanking and commending the Commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for their courageous vote to require modest, beginning amounts of video description through major networks, large cable providers, and large sellers of satellite broadcast services. We who are blind and low vision must indeed have the right to equally effective communications of all types. We can not fully participate in the culture of the United States, or the world, without these accommodations. We must never be relegated to being a population only entitled to certain types of communication, Access to communications for purposes of entertainment must never be considered to be of lesser importance than communications for purposes of emergency or news related information. It is all important. We need access to all information offered in the American culture. Video description is an excellent vehicle for providing important pieces of information otherwise completely missed by those persons who are blind and low vision. The regulations adopted in July concerning video description are most certainly consistent with the spirit of both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act.

THE PETITIONS FOR RECONSIDERATION ARE UTTERLY WITHOUT FOUNDATION. No new

information has been submitted to provide justification for a re-opening of Docket 99-339. The cable, network, and motion picture industrial representatives, and the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) have instead provided essentially a re-statement of arguments thoroughly explored through the original scrutiny of 99-339, and by the FCC deliberations which lead to the July vote.

As a legally blind person, I have become aware of how much of the significance of television programming I miss because I often watch television productions with my wife, who is totally blind, and/or totally blind friends and co-workers. On such occasions, the question I fear most from my blind associates is, "What's happening now?" I usually find that I am not really sure enough to be able to explain it. In Kansas, which is the principle catchment area for Envision, we are also aware of the benefit of video description, and I am personally aware of how much I miss of programming, because we do have a limited amount of video description available to us through most of the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) stations in Kansas. As a person who is congenitally legally blind, I never knew about all of the action and nuances I was missing until video description made this information available.

The argument of some of the motion picture associations, that people who are congenitally blind can not benefit from video description because they have no visual frame of reference, is a ludicrous assertion which could not be further from the truth. To the contrary, such individuals often benefit profoundly from video description because it fills in information they have no other way of getting. If the blindness is congenital, then the information is particularly important because a lack of history of seeing indeed makes it more difficult to make informed assumptions about what may be happening.

It has also been alleged throughout the processes involved with Docket 99-339 that video description somehow violates the First Amendment rights of the artists by somehow altering the fundamental nature of the art. This too is an argument which defies logic and common sense. Video description does not change the fundamental nature of a performing arts piece any more than moving a painting from a gallery which is not wheelchair accessible to one which is accessible alters the fundamental nature of the painting. Also, video description is a voluntary accommodation. Someone who does not wish to hear it, or who believes that the description is altering the original art form, has the option to simply turn the video description track off and still enjoy the art in its original form.

One of the major objections of the NFB, which is driving them to petition for the reconsideration of the regulations, seems to be their concern that the cues for emergency information do not go far enough. While we at Envision must agree in our support for a full and true reading of emergency information via the separate audio program (SAP) convention, we would submit that NFB is using a destructive and counterproductive methodology to attempt to bring this access about. NFB should not jeopardize access to information which we need and fought long and hard to get, simply because there is some other type of information access which they feel is needed even more.

The NFB petition thus might be regarded constructively as a petition for a new and additional rulemaking on the issue of emergency information. As stated earlier, however, we can not support undoing another type of information access simply because a few people want a different type of information access first. We need all types of information. There should be no process of prioritization. Asking for additional types of information should not negate, or be considered as related to, types of information which the FCC has already agreed should be provided.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Please reject in their entirety, all petitions for reconsideration of Docket 99-339.

Sincerely yours:

Michael Byington
Director of Governmental Affairs

MB/mb
??

Joseph and Velma Calandra
550 W. Miller
Apt. 2
Springfield, Illinois 62702

November 7, 2000

TO: Magalie Salis, Secretary
The Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Secretary:

We are writing to endorse Docket No. 99-339, July 21 ruling by FCC concerning descriptive video for television viewing by the blind and visually impaired.

We are both blind and live alone as many blind and visually impaired people do today. We watch our share of television but it would be so much better if we could also understand what is transmitted visually that the audio does not give us. From our Library which serves the visually impaired, we do get descriptive video movies. The descriptive video makes the movies so much more enjoyable.

I cannot imagine why anyone would oppose this ruling. I have been informed that even some blind people are opposed to this FCC ruling. After all, Access to the spoken word is given to the deaf, I feel that we, the blind, should also have complete television accessibility. Do we not pay the same amount of money for cable and regular TV viewing that John Q. Public pays?

In closing, we applaud you for the work you have done in the past and commend you for having the foresight for taking this step, the ruling of July, 2000 which will make our television viewing more interesting, informative and entertaining.

Sincerely,

Joseph and Velma Calandra

Anne Fesh

From: kim m venable [rsva@juno.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 09, 2000 3:01 PM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org
Subject: Docket #99-339

To: Magalie Salas, Secretary
The Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

From: Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America
1808 Faith Place Suite B
Terrytown, LA 70056-4104

Re: Opposition to petitioners for reconsideration
of the reported order on video description.

This letter is in support of video description on our television sets. It is our organizations understanding that The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has received "Petitions to Reconsider" their rule requiring the television networks to begin providing video description. We would urge the Commission to stand firm on their recent decision in favor of descriptive video. Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America (a national organization for the blind) supports this decision and would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Commissioners for requiring the networks to begin providing this essential information service to people who are blind. This is a very important and valuable service for individuals who are blind and visually impaired. They will not have to rely on their family and friends to tell them what is happening on the screen.

Let me say again that our organization strongly supports the FCC for their courageous and very appropriate ruling. Please do not take away the rights of the blind to receive this mreceived service for the blind.

Sincerely
Terry Camardelle, President

Anne Fesh

From: Charles Crawford [CCrawford@ACB.org]
Sent: Thursday, November 02, 2000 9:51 AM
To: AFesh@ACB.org
Subject: Please print this.

Anne,

Here is another one for the file on FCC letters.

>X-Authentication-Warning: zoom1.telepath.com: majordom set sender to
>acb-l-request@telepath.com using -f
>From: "Ray and Karyn Campbell" <farmboy@concentric.net>
>To: "ACB Discussion List" <acb-l@telepath.com>
>Subject: Copy of my Letter to the FCC on Video Description
>Date: Wed, 1 Nov 2000 21:03:30 -0600
>X-Mailer: Microsoft Outlook Express 5.00.2314.1300
>Sender: acb-l-request@telepath.com
>Reply-To: acb-l@telepath.com
>
>+== acb-l Message from "Ray and Karyn Campbell" <farmboy@concentric.net> ==+
>November 1, 2000
>
>
>
>Ms. Magali Salas, Secretary
>Federal Communications Commission
>445 12th Street SW
>Washington, DC 20554
>
>Dear Secretary Salas:
>
>The commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on
>September 11, 2000 recognized that I as a person who is blind have an equal
>right to information and entertainment on television by issuing a final
>rule, Docket 99-339, requiring that video description be provided for prime
>time television programming starting in 2002. I would like to thank the
>commissioners for taking this bold step toward providing me and others who
>are blind or visually impaired equal access to television broadcasting.
>
>Video description will allow me to sit down with my family, watch a
>television program or movie and not have to rely on someone sitting with me
>to describe what is happening on the screen. We will all be able to enjoy
>the program. I have enjoyed video described movies made available through
>Descriptive Video Service in my home. I have watched two movies, "Top Gun"
>and "Three Men and a Baby" with and without video description. I enjoyed
>these movies much more with description because I knew everything that was
>happening on the screen. I knew what costumes the actors and actresses were
>wearing and what the setting of each scene was like. This is information
>people who can see always know when watching a movie and they take it for
>granted. Why should I as a person who is blind be denied access to that
>information? The FCC showed on September 11 that it believes I should not
>be denied equal access to that information in television programming.
>
>I have also been privileged to watch two movies at a local theater where the
>DVS Theatrical (tm) system is installed. This system allowed me to wear
>headphones which, through infrared technology, were receiving video
>descriptions made for each of the movies, "The Mask of Zoro" and "Hanging
>Up." My wife, who is also blind, and I thoroughly enjoyed our outings to
>the theater to see these movies thanks to the availability of video
>description.
>
>ON October 11, the FCC received petitions from the broadcast industry and
>the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) urging reconsideration of the
>rules requiring video description on prime time television. I strongly urge
>that these petitions be rejected because they do not present any new
>arguments which the commission has not already considered.

>

>Broadcasters raise concerns about the cost of video description. These are
>similar to concerns raised some ten years ago when requirements for closed
>captioning of tv programming first came out. Now, 90% of tvb programs are
>closed captioned and we do not hear broadcasters complaining about the cost.
>The cost of video description is minimal when compared to the revenue
>broadcasters and program producers derive from tv programming.

>

>The NFB's petition for reconsideration asserts that requirements for video
>description have been placed ahead of requiring verbal announcements of
>emergency information being scrolled across television screens accompanied
>by only a beep tone. While this is certainly a valid concern, the fact is
>solutions to make this emergency information available in a verbal format
>still need to be identified. Video description has been available on public
>broadcasting stations and home videos for about ten years or so and in movie
>theaters for at least two and a half years. While the NFB's assertions
>regarding emergency announcements need to be given serious consideration,
>the commission should not delay implementation of the requirements for video
>description on prime time television.

>

>Video description is a proven method of making the visual elements of movies
>and other tv programming accessible to people like me who are blind or
>visually impaired. I thank the commission once again for recognizing that I
>and others who are blind or visually impaired have for too long been denied
>access to television programs. Please do not delay the implementation of
>the requirements for video description on prime time tv programs based on
>the petitions for reconsideration you have received as they present no valid
>arguments that would warrant such a delay or other reconsideration of the
>applicable final rule issued September 11, Docket 99-339.

>

>Thank you for your time, attention, and for the commission's recognition of
>my right to access information and entertainment on television. I will be
>watching what happens very closely.

>

>Sincerely,

>

>Ray Campbell

>

>Cc (Electronically): Disability Rights Office, Federal Communications
>Commission
>American Council of the Blind e-mail list

>

>

>

>*****

>* ACB-L is maintained and brought to you as a service *

>* of the American Council of the Blind. *

>*****

Anne Fesh

From: Fred Carter [fcarter@linc.org]
Sent: Thursday, November 02, 2000 3:36
To: info@acb.org
Subject: Descriptive Letter Reply

Hi:

Below is a letter that I e-mailed and sent a hard copy of to the FCC.

Fred

Thursday, November 02, 2000

Magalie Salas, Secretary

The Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20554

Dear Ms. Salas:

I am a 53 year old blind person who uses the Descriptive Video Service and I find it essential in understanding what is going on in a movie's story line as well as on some PBS programming.

I would like to applaud you for making it possible for blind people to be able to watch regular TV shows as well as being able to watch movies and not having to ask someone else what is going on during the viewing of a movie or TV program.

The passing of Docket #99-339 is going to help blind people be able to live a more meaningful and independent life and they will be on an even plane with sighted people when it comes to television and movies.

I am opposed to those who want you to reconsider the action that may reverse the passing of the new

11/2/2000

law, that goes into effect April 2002. The people who oppose this ruling have no new information which should change the ruling for the betterment of blind people. It seems that they just need to twist the ruling to suit their own selfish needs.

I am looking forward to April 2002 when I will be able to turn on the TV and view programming that is supposed to be accessible to everyone, including blind people.

Again I would like to thank you for helping the blind have access to movies and TV programming, I appreciate it very much.

Sincerely yours,

Fred Carter

fcarter@linc.org

11/2/2000

Anne Fesh

From: Trinity Village [trinity@seark.net]

Sent: Friday, November 03, 2000 3:13

To: access@fcc.gov

Cc: info@acb.org

Subject: Docket No. 99-339

To Whom It May Concern:

"In opposition to petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on video description".

I deeply appreciate your courageous vote requiring the networks to begin providing this service to people who are blind and visually impaired. It would be very important to me and any other visually impaired person to be able to enjoy television shows to understand the visuals of the programming.

Please take this opportunity to aid all visually handicapped persons in this nation.

Sincerely,

Irene Carter

11/3/2000

Anne Fesh

From: Matthew Chao [mchao@world.std.com]
Sent: Saturday, November 04, 2000 7:20 PM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org
Subject: Opposition to Reconsideration of Descriptive Video (Docket No. 99-339)

Margalie Salas, et al.

I am writing to express my appreciation to the Commissioners of the FCC for voting in favor of requiring descriptive video on major TV networks. Descriptive video as broadcast on some PBS shows have enhanced my enjoyment of TV programs, and virtually eliminated my need to ask others "What's happening now?"

Since your ruling, the petitioners who are appealing your decision have not presented any new information to make such a reconsideration worthwhile. Those parties appealing your ruling neglected to address the issue of making emergency information accessible to those who are totally blind, as that information is often scrolled across the bottom of the screen.

It should also be noted that the National Federation of the Blind does NOT speak for the majority of persons who are blind or visually impaired. Please uphold your ruling concerning descriptive video.

Sincerely,
Matthew Chao

Anne Fesh

From: ParkLin [parklin@cyclemasterusa.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 01, 2000 9:12 AM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: Fw: VIDEO DESCRIPTION

----- Original Message -----

From: ParkLin
To: access@fcc.gov

FCC DOCKET # 99-339

YOU MADE THE RIGHT DECISION ON JULY 21st. PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW ANY INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP TO INFLUENCE A CHANGE IN THAT RULING.

THE TECHNOLOGY THAT ENABLES PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL CHALLENGES TO LEARN FROM AND ENJOY THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES AS EVERYONE ELSE, SHOULD ALWAYS BE MADE AVAILABLE. INCLUDING: "VIDEO DESCRIPTION".

**SINCERELY,
PARKER AND LINDA JOY CHASE**

11/1/2000

Anne Fesh

From: Chastain32@aol.com
Sent: Monday, November 06, 2000 11:43 AM
To: access@fcc.gov; info@acb.org
Subject: Docket No.99-339

IN OPPOSITION TO PETITIONERS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Thank you for your courageous vote requiring the networks to begin providing this essential information service to people who are blind and visually impaired.

The video description is such a wonderful help for the blind and visually impaired when it comes to understanding and enjoying TV.

To my knowledge the petitioners have not provided any new information which was not already known at the time the FCC reached its decision and issued the ruling.

Thank You,
Teresa Chastain

Anne Fesh

From: ab7hw [ab7hw@dancris.com]
Sent: Sunday, November 05, 2000 8:14 AM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org; ab7hw@arri.net
Subject: Descriptive Video

>From Mike Chrisman
8643 E. Solano Dr.
Scottsdale, AZ 85250
1-480-483-6584

Subject: official filings, Docket No. 997339

Please accept my appreciation to all Commissioners of the FCC for your courageous vote requiring the networks to begin providing Descriptive Video which conveys essential information service to people who are blind and visually impaired.

I am sure you can realize how important it is for anyone who cannot see the screen to have an alternate means (i.e., video description) for knowing what's happening on the television. I have enjoyed video description on movies which I have purchased and I have been able to access it in the past! How I have been looking forward to turning on my TV set starting in April, 2002, to enjoy television shows with my family and friends and to use the video description to help me understand the visual aspects of the programming.

Let me conclude by reaffirming the value of video description and that the petitioners have not provided any new information which was not already known at the time the FCC reached its decision and issued the ruling. This is a crucial component of any petition you make to reconsider your past rulings.

Please note that I am submitting my comments "IN OPPOSITION TO PETITIONERS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION".

I am very much in favor of the entertainment industry providing Descriptive Video in all Television and Movie presentations. Being totally Blind I am sure you can see the importance of Descriptive Video to me and the millions of Blind in America.

Yours truly, Mike Chrisman

Anne Fesh

From: ab7hw [ab7hw@dancris.com]
Sent: Sunday, November 05, 2000 8:12 AM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org; ab7hw@dancris.com
Subject: Descriptive Video

>From Peggy Chrisman
8643 E. Solano Dr.
Scottsdale, AZ 85250
1-480-483-6584

Subject: official filings, Docket No. 99?339

Please accept my appreciation to all Commissioners of the FCC for your courageous vote requiring the networks to begin providing Descriptive Video which conveys essential information service to people who are blind and visually impaired.

I am sure you can realize how important it is for anyone who cannot see the screen to have an alternate means (i.e., video description) for knowing what's happening on the television. I have enjoyed video description on movies which I have purchased and I have been able to access it in the past! How I have been looking forward to turning on my TV set starting in April, 2002, to enjoy television shows with my family and friends and to use the video description to help me understand the visual aspects of the programming.

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Please note that I am submitting my comments "IN OPPOSITION TO PETITIONERS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION".

I am very much in favor of the entertainment industry providing Descriptive Video in all Television and Movie presentations. Being totally Blind I am sure you can see the importance of Descriptive Video to me and the millions of Blind in America.

Yours truly, Peggy Chrisman

Anne Fesh

From: ab7hw [ab7hw@dancris.com]
Sent: Sunday, November 05, 2000 8:08 AM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org; ab7hw@dancris.com
Subject: official filings, Docket No. 99-339

>From Richard Chrisman
8643 E. Solano Dr.
Scottsdale, AZ 85250
1-480-483-6584

Subject: official filings, Docket No. 99-339

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I am sure you can realize how important it is for anyone who cannot see the screen to have an alternate means (i.e., video description) for knowing what's happening on the television. I have enjoyed video description on movies which I have purchased and I have been able to access it in the past! How I have been looking forward to turning on my TV set starting in April, 2002, to enjoy television shows with my family and friends and to use the video description to help me understand the visual aspects of the programming.

Let me conclude by reaffirming the value of video description and that the petitioners have not provided any new information which was not already known at the time the FCC reached its decision and issued the ruling. This is a crucial component of any petition you make to reconsider your past rulings.

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I am very much in favor of the entertainment industry providing Descriptive Video in all Television and Movie presentations. Being totally Blind I am sure you can see the importance of Descriptive Video to me and the millions of Blind in America.

Yours truly, Richard Chrisman

Anne Fesh

From: Charles Cronin Jr. [charmary@worldnet.att.net]
Sent: Monday, November 06, 2000 8:08 PM
To: FCC Disability; ACB Office; Lori Scharff
Subject: Docket No. 99-339

Magalie Salas
Secretary, FCC
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

November 2, 2000

Dear Ms. Sales:

Please note that this letter pertains to Docket No. 99-339. It contains comments that are submitted in opposition to petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on Video Description.

My wife MaryEllen is totally blind, and I am visually impaired. We both were grateful for the Federal Communications Commission's decision to require that television networks provide some level of video description. We are distressed to learn that a petition to reconsider this order has been filed. We oppose this request, as it presents no new facts that would warrant reconsideration of this order.

We believe that the provision of video description will improve the quality of our television experience. Descriptive Video gives us access to information that most people with normal vision take for granted. We are saddened that the television networks oppose it so vigorously.

Once again we would like to express our strong opposition to the petition to reconsider the commission's original decision, and we would like to thank the commission for having the courage and foresight to make that decision.

Respectfully,

MaryEllen Cronin
Charles R. Cronin Jr.

Anne Fesh

From: john clapp [sylviajohn@aristotle.net]
Sent: Saturday, November 04, 2000 9:16
To: Magalie Salas
Cc: Charles Crawford
Subject: Docket No. 99-339

November 4, 2000

Ms. Magalie Salas
Secretary
The Federal Communications Commission

Dear Madame Secretary:

My wife is totally blind would like to be able to watch TV with the help of video description. Thank you for requiring the networks to provide this service. I understand petitions have been submitted for you to reconsider your order. My wife is in favor of your order to require descriptive video; it will enable her to watch TV when she wants to and participate more fully in daily life.

Thus this letter is "In opposition to Petitioners for Reconsideration of the Reported Order on Video Description".

Sincerely, John Clapp for Sylvia Roose

11/6/2000

Anne Fesh

From: Duane Davis [ddavis@unca.edu]
Sent: Monday, November 06, 2000 8:42 PM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org
Subject: do not reconsider the July ruling

November 6, 2000

Ms. Magalie Salas, Secretary
The Federal Communication Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Docket No. 99-339

Dear Ms. Salas:

I want to commend the Commissioners of the FCC for the July decision to demand that video description be provided for broadcasts. This will be a great thing for visually impaired people. However, I was saddened to hear that some special interests were lobbying to get you to reconsider this important decision. I am submitting comments in opposition to petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on video description.

It is frustrating to visually impaired individuals to watch a program for 50 minutes only to wonder what happens at the end because the ending was "visual." This may not seem like a very important issue to some people, but it is part of the daily series of events that conspire to wear down the spirit and discourage those who have visual impairments. Every day there are countless things that visually impaired people cannot do that many people take for granted in their daily activities. Every day, over and over again, visually impaired people are confronted with the abject realization that they cannot participate in society as others do. The long-term effects of these are discouraging and depressing. It is good for the visually impaired individuals, and good for society, for visually impaired individuals to be motivated and included whenever possible instead of actively excluding them from everyday activities. I think that it is important that the FCC not reconsider the July ruling, since this would be an outright act of exclusion. I implore you to go forward with video description as planned.

Sincerely,

Duane H. Davis
Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Duane H. Davis
Philosophy Department
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One University Heights
Asheville, NC 28804-8505

phone (828) 251-6367
fax (828) 251-6820

Anne Fesh

From: DhDavis14@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, November 07, 2000 12:53 AM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org
Subject: supporting video description

14 Zephyr Drive
Asheville, North Carolina 28806
November 6, 2000

Dear FCC Commissioners:

I was very pleased with your decision on July 21 of this year to make video description more available on network television starting April, 2002. I vividly recall the first time that I learned about video description. I attended an American Council of the Blind conference, and saw it demonstrated with the movie, "A Girl of the Limberlost." I was thrilled to think that in the future video description would be as common as closed captioning. It has been a long road, but with your decision in July I knew there would be a wonderful future, and I knew when it would be arriving.

At age five I was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa. By the time I reached the age of sixteen I was unable to drive, because of the fast progression of this eye disease. At the age of twenty-two I could no longer read books--a love of my life, and needed to switch to books on tape. Now I am almost forty, and my remaining vision makes it difficult to see what is happening on the television screen, even when I sit about a foot from the screen. Television has always been a part of my life. I probably watch about twelve hours a week. This will be so much more enjoyable of a pastime when video description becomes more available. I could tell you in great detail the frustrations that I have felt when subtitles and actions, which are critical to the plot, are not accessible to me. So much so, that at times I cannot figure out how events in the plot fit together, or I am not even able to figure out how the program ended, because it was conveyed visually. I own seven descriptive videos, and when I become frustrated over not being able to watch television and understand what is happening I put one of the videos in our VCR. I had decided to make it a goal to have a television with the SAP capability by 2002, so I can enjoy the growing number of programs available with video description.

I understand that there are petitions for reconsideration of your decision of July 21. These petitions have been submitted by television, cable, and motion picture industry associations. It is my understanding that these groups have not provided any new information which was not already known at the time the FCC reached its decision, and issued its ruling. The Docket Number is 99-339. I have submitted the above comments "in opposition to petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on video description." I hope that you will stand firm in your previous decision, and help make television more accessible to people who are blind or who have low vision.

Sincerely,

Judy L. Davis

Anne Fesh

From: B. della Santina [bdellas@ix.netcom.com]
Sent: Friday, November 10, 2000 4:28 PM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org

To whom it may concern,

As a blind woman interested in the world around me economically, politically and culturally, I cannot tell you how much audio description means to me. I am working with AudioVision Inc.. and the San Francisco Opera to develop a system of description and reading of super titles; I attend described plays at the San Jose Civic Light Opera; The Ashland Shakespeare Festival has a wonderful system in place for audio description, but the only time television is fully accessible is during the very occasional Masterpiece or Mystery Theaters done by WGBH on PBS.

How pleased I was when the FCC finally took up the issue and seemed to offer the blind community the same accessibility to television that the deaf have. Now I understand that ruling is being reconsidered. I beg you to bring back through audio description a significant alternative to the sense I have lost.

Betty della Santina
27 W. Blithedale Ave.
Mill Valley, CA

Anne Fesh

From: Roger N. Dennis [rdennis1@rochester.rr.com]
Sent: Sunday, November 12, 2000 1:08 PM
To: access@fcc.gov
Cc: info@acb.org
Subject: video discription

I am legally blind and have seen and do appreciate the value of video description on broadcast television. I do thank the Commission for passing this action for rule making last July and do oppose the petition to revisit this issue. I really feel that in this devours world we live in, this rule will definitely improve the quality of life for over 4,000.000 people in the US.